

CEREBUS
LATTER
DAYS 22

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AND
GOD
AS
HIMSELF

HE
YHWH

SHE
YHWH

IT
YHWH



Chasing
YHWH
VI:

The
Final
Flower!

AARDVARK VANAHEIM INC. IN ASSOCIATION WITH ERSATZ BOTANICAL DEITIES AND SUDDENLY NAKED ANY LANDSCAPING INC. PRESENTS BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE LIVING TRING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE EARTH
HE YHWH, SHE YHWH AND IT YHWH STARRING IN "CHASING YHWH VI: THE FINAL FLOWER" ALSO STARRING GOD AS HIMSELF KOWISBERG, THE NOT-SO-GOOD SAMARITAN, CEREBUS AND ME AS THE STENOGRAPHER.
FEATURING THE HIT SONG "IT'S GETTING HOT IN HERE, SO STRIP OFF ALL YOUR LEAVES" WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY A HOT NEW YOUNG BAND SO HOT AND SO NEW THAT EVEN THEIR MANAGER HAS NEVER HEARD OF THEM
AVAILABLE ON "FINAL FLOWER: THE SOUNDTRACK" INCLUDING HOT, NEW YOUNG GIRL SINGERS SO HOT AND SO NEW THAT THEY'LL BE HAS-BEENS BY THE TIME THEY'RE OLD ENOUGH TO DREP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL

287
FEB

"THE 'SYNCHRONICITY' TRIPTYCH"

CEREBUS NO. 74, 75, 76 COVERS

"The 'Synchronicity' Triptych," consisting of Dave Sim & Gerhard's original painted covers to Cerebus 74, 75, 76—featuring Jaka, Cerebus and President Weisshaupt—will be auctioned on ebay (beginning March 25, 2003 and ending April 5, 2003) in association with *The Beguiling Books & Art*. The history of the piece, which begins at the 1981 San Diego Comicon with Dave Sim as a young husband and which concludes with the divorced Dave Sim in 1985 (the year it was produced)—is documented in an essay which can be read on *The Beguiling's* web page at www.beguiling.com (which also includes photographs of the professionally framed and matted triptych). The triptych will be on display at *The Beguiling* until April 5.

◆

"The 'Synchronicity' Triptych' represented the first time that I had had a Cerebus cover framed for myself since issue 9. It hung on the wall of my studio when we were on the third floor of 47 King St. W. Peter (Birkemoe, the Beguiling owner) mentioned to me that he had a potential customer for the Jaka cover and I told him that it was framed as part of a triptych. I didn't mention that it was gathering dust in a corner of the closet in my office and had been since we had moved to our current location. I owed Peter a favour or two and—when I decided to let him use the triptych to help him publicize his status as one of Canada's top purveyors of comic art—I started thinking about the history of the piece. This essay is the result."

Dave Sim

◆



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CEREBUS

NO. 287

FEBRUARY 2003

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Characters/
pencil & ink,
mechanical tones,
lettering

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Background
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LATTER DAYS

PROLOGUE

(Cerebus 266
and 267)

BOOK ONE

(Cerebus 268 to
288)

BOOK TWO

(Cerebus 289 to
300)

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SO... WHATEVER
HAPPENED TO KONIGSBERG?

KONIGSBERG?
WELL, HE JUST KEPT
GETTING **WORSE AND
WORSE** UNTIL
... FINALLY...

CEREBUS HAD
TO SEND **"FIND WHAT'S
WRONG AND FIX IT"**
WISE FELLOW OVER
THERE

FORTUNATELY,
WE FOUND THE
PROBLEM **RIGHT**
AWAY...

ALL OF THESE
BOOKS BY SOME
**NUTCASE NAMED
JUNGFRAU.**

SO HE
THREW 'EM
ALL OUT...

... AND REPLACED
THEM WITH... **TOYS**
(BASICALLY).

TOYS.

**AYE. TOY WAGONS, PAINT-
BY-NUMBERS, COLOURING
BOOKS, CRAYONS, POLLS...**

... **MASKS.**

GEE—ALL OF THE **CRAP**
IN THOSE **JUNGFRAU** BOOKS
HAD TURNED KONIGSBERG
MENTALLY BACK INTO A
CHILD...

SO, (BASICALLY) WE
HAD TO HELP HIM TO
GROW UP ALL OVER
AGAIN.

HUNH.

and covered her with a *vaile* and wrapped her self and sate in Enaijm..." Enaijm translates as "the door of eyes," which, you can well imagine Judah was being watched pretty closely at this point by just about every yoochwhoo under the sun since they all knew that he was God's representative in the story and his only chance to pass on his seed, at this point, is his youngest son—because his youngest son is the only one that Yoochwhoo hasn't killed... [laughs]...yet. The yoochwhos know that God isn't likely to pass on the seed through Judah's *youngest* son, because that would switch the covenant from the elder to the younger being: So—what the yoochwhoo's, what *everyone*, wants to know at this point, is *what is Judah going to do?* Well, [laughs] as it turns out, it wasn't so much a question of what *Judah* was going to do. It was, "What is *Tamar* going to do?" Because Tamar—who, up to that point had been the odds-on favourite to pass on Judah's seed—can see that she's about to get dealt out of the game unless she does something, *quick!* "...for shee sawe that Shelah was grown, and she was not given vnto him to wife. When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot: because she had covered her face. And hee turned vnto her by the way, and said, Goe to, I pray thee, let me come in vnto thee: (for he knew not that she his daughter in law)" Needless to say, whatever Yoochwhoo might've had against Tamar up to this point, is completely forgotten and Yoochwhoo jumps straight into the story up to her eyeballs. The "hubba hubba" game has that kind of [laughs] strange effect on Yoochwhoo. "...and she said, What wilt thou giue mee, that thou mayest come in vnto me? And hee said, I will send thee a kid of the goats:" There's the other kid of the goats, by the way. The blood of the first one was used by the brothers to deceive Jacob that Joseph had died and now the *second* kid of the goats gets used by Yoochwhoo for a completely different kind of deception. "...and shee saide, Wilt thou giue a pledge, till thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I giue thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staffe, that is in thine hand:" Oh, this is Yoochwhoo, all right. [laughs] The signet is a *man's* version of the "jewel for the forehead" that Rebekah got from Abraham's elder servant. The bracelets are a *man's* version of the bracelets that Rebekah got from Abraham's elder servant. And, on top of it, why not a *man's* staff? Which, of course, is made of wood, which comes from trees, which are "*he's*" [laughs again]. Oh, aye, this is Yoochwhoo, all right. With Yoochwhoo's help, Tamar is about to give Jacob a run for his money as far as usurpers go. "...and he gaue it her, & came in vnto her, and she conceived by him. And shee arose and went away, and laide by her vaile from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the kiddie by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive pledge from the womans hand:" The same way that Abraham had sent his elder servant. "...but he found her not. Then hee asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot, that was openly by the way side? And they said, There was no harlot in this." Yoochwhoo must've been turning cartwheels in the middle of the earth. The "door of eyes" wasn't just the yoochwhoo's. Everyone was watching—God, Yoochwhoo, God's Angels, Yoochwhoo's Angels and everyone's reaction was the same. "There was no harlot in this." "And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot finde her: and also the men of the place said, That there was no harlot in this. And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we become a contempt: behold, I sent this kiddie, and thou hast not found her. And it came to passe about three months after; that it was tolde Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot, and also behold, she is with child by whoredom: and Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man whose these are, am I with child: and she saide, Discerne, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staffe. And Judah acknowledged, and said, She hath bin more righteous then I: because that I gaue her not to Shelah my sonne: and he knew her againe no more." An absolutely HUGE win for Yoochwhoo. Especially the staff. Which she doesn't "cash in" on for a few hundred years. So, there was bound to be a lot of curiosity about the baby Tamar was going to bare to Judah. "And it came to passe in the time of her trauaile, that beholde, twines were in her wombe." Twins! This is significant! Twins! Like Jacob and Esau! An elder and a younger! "And it came to passe when shee trauailed, that..." Name missing [laughs]. No big surprise. "...put out his hand, and the midwife tooke and bound vpon his hand a skarlet threed, saying this came out first. And it came to passe as he drew backe his hand, that behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? Breach vpon thee: Therefore his name was called Pharez" That is, a breach. "And afterward came out his brother the skarlet threed vpon his hand, and his name was called Zarah." Does a hand coming out, count as a birth? If so, then Zarah was the elder. Does the whole baby have to come out to count as a birth? If so, then Pharez was the elder. What if Cerebus was to suggest to you that the hand that came out represented the hand of God, in the same way as Benjamin was named "the son of the right hand"? The same way that, although Yoochwhoo is calling the shots, it is God's "hands" that are making all her crazy ideas real. And does it matter what the midwife's opinion was? [laughs] Nah.

AND DID
IT WORK?

WELL, AYE AND NAY.
ONE OF THE TONS TURNED
OUT TO BE THIS MOUSE
MASK, SEE.

A
"MOUSE
MASK."

AYE. YOU
KNOW.

THOSE TINY, TINY
QUAKING...

I
KNOW
WHAT A
MOUSE
IS.

OH. A ? AYE.

WELL, ANYWAY,
THAT WAS THE MASK.
KONGBERG PICKED OUT
AND HERE'S WHY HE
MUCH ALL THE TIME.

SO, WHAT HAPPENED
TO HIM THEN?
WALKING AROUND WITH
HIS MOUSE MASK
ON, I MEAN.

GUESS.

GIRL FRIEND?

BINGO.

neither hearken unto thy voice of the first signe, that they will beleuee the voice of the latter signe." See, Yoohoo's stacking the deck in her favour by making the serpent—the talking snake from the garden eastward of Eden—the first sign that Moshe is to show to Pharaoh. Then the *second* sign is for Moshe to put his hand into his bosom and pull it out after it has turned "leprous as snow" [laughs]. This is probably Moshe's own description which is not going make Yoohoo very happy, since this sign is Yoohoo's interpretation of God's version of how everything came to be, that Yoohoo—the light—came out of God the same way that Hawwa came out of Adam's bosom, as one of Adam's ribs. Needless to say, [laughs] Yoohoo doesn't think of herself as being "leprous as snow".

Cerebus pictures God saying, "No, write that down, Moshe. That's good. 'Leprous as snow.'" "And it shall come to passe, if they will not beleuee also these two signes, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and powre it the drie land: and the water which thou takest out of the river, shalte and shall be blood upon the drie land." Oh. Yoohoo is definitely getting crafty in her old age. She knows that the whole point of the exercise is that Pharaoh *isn't* going to "hearken unto" any of the signs since he represents Yoohoo in the story. So, what the heck? Why not get a nice "blood meal" out of it? In fact, when the time comes—in verse seventeen of chapter seven—Yoohoo decides to really "go for broke" and has God turn the entire river to blood [laughs]. Talk about a "Yoohoo dream come true." But, anyway, back at chapter four verse eleven, here's a real "three and one"

Yoohoo-and-God combination: "...who maketh the dumbe or deaf, or the

flip

Moshe saide unto the people, Feare ye not, stand still, and see the saluation of the Yoohoo which he will shew to you to day. For whereas you have seen the Egyptians today, ye shall see them againe no more for euer. The Yoohoo shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. "Fight for you? Yoohoo must've thought, Who said anything about fighting?" [laughs] "And the Yoohoo said unto Moshe, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Spake unto the children of Israel, that they goe forward." You know, C'mon Moshe, let's get out of here! "But lift thou up thy rodde, and stretch out thine hand ouer the Sea, and diuide it: and the children of Israel shall goe on dry ground throw the mids of the Sea." [laughs] They will? Yoohoo must've thought. Remember, God is the rod, the staff that Tamar got from Judah back in Book One, Yoohoo's big win. "And I, beholde, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and

flip

Well no big surprise, it turns out to be the women. Moshe's sister. "Thy right hand, O Yoohoo, is become glorified in power, thy right hand, O Yoohoo, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellencie thou has ouerthrowen them, that rose vp against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils..." And, uh so on. Mind you, they're singing all this. You wouldn't remember because we haven't had a war in so long, but this is what "camp followers" are like. Women and homosexuals. The Egyptians are just lucky they were *drowned* or all the women and homosexuals would've...well. It's like the difference between a dog and a cat. Men are dogs and war is a war. You have to kill guys, so you kill guys. That's, you know, what a war is. But women and homosexuals are like cats. You ever seen a cat get hold of a mouse when the cat *isn't* hungry? The way they'll break the mouse's leg or gnaw off one of the mouse's ears just to watch it suffer? "Camp followers". If a cat could sing it would

flip

Moshe let his father in law depart, and he went his way into his owne land." Okay, two major things happen in chapter eighteen which—for thousands of years—the Hebrew people will be paying for. First, Aaron gets a whiff of and a taste for sacrificial beef. Second, Moshe's father-in-law, who is an *Egyptian god* and a *pagan*, talks Moshe into giving away his authority as God's Prophet to a bunch of other guys. How would *Moshe* know who were "*men of truth, having countousnesse*" Moshe isn't *God*, Moshe is *God's Prophet*. You want to know where everything started to go wrong, switching from a Prophet to a bunch of Judges is a good place to

flip

Set bounds vpon the mount, and sanctifie it." [laughs] Yoohwhoo's so scared that God is coming that she forgets her own instructions that she gave to Moshe. "Let's get out of

flip

five commandments each: Yoohwhoo and God united. He-Yoohwhoo, She-Yoohwhoo, It-Yoohwhoo, Yoohwhoo and God. Five. You can tell which commandments are Yoohwhoo's because they're [laughs] wordy damn things. The first one is God's: "*Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*" See? Very simple instruction. The next one is Yoohwhoo's: "*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow downe thyselfe to them, nor serue them: For I the Yoohwhoo thy God a ielous God, visiting the iniquitie of the fathers vpon the children, vnto the thirde and fourth of them that hate me: And shewing mercy vnto thousands of them that loue mee, and keepe my Commandements.*" See what Cerebus means? The next three are Yoohwhoo's as well. "*Thou shalt not take the Name of the Yoohwhoo thy God in vaine: for the Yoohwhoo will not holde him guiltlesse, that taketh his Name in vaine. Remember the Sabbath day, to keepe it holy.*" Just like that? You would think it was one of God's, but Yoohwhoo just has to bubble on, like any female. "*Six dayes shalt thou labour, and doe all thy worke: But the seueneth day the Sabbath of the Yoohwhoo thy God: thou shalt not doe any worke, thou, nor thy some, nor thy daughter, thy man seruant, nor thy mayd seruant, nor thy cattell, nor thy stranger that within thy gates: For in sixe dayes the Yoohwhoo made heauen and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seueneth day*



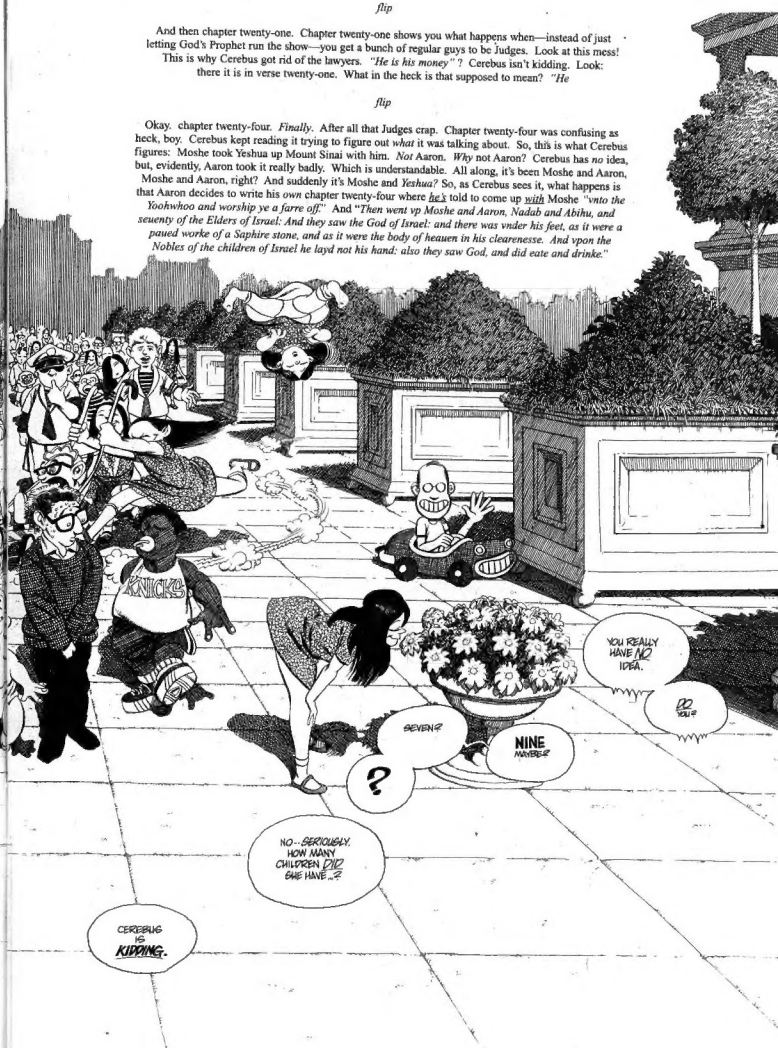


And then chapter twenty-one. Chapter twenty-one shows you what happens when—instead of just letting God's Prophet run the show—you get a bunch of regular guys to be Judges. Look at this idea! This is why Cerebus got rid of the lawyers. "He is his money"? Cerebus isn't kidding. Look: there it is in verse twenty-one. What in the heck is that supposed to mean? "He

flip

flip

Okay, chapter twenty-four. Finally. After all that Judges crap. Chapter twenty-four was confusing as heck, boy. Cerebus kept reading it trying to figure out what it was talking about. So, this is what Cerebus figures: Moshe took Yeshua up Mount Sinai with him. Not Aaron. Why not Aaron? Cerebus has no idea, but, evidently, Aaron took it really badly. Which is understandable. All along, it's been Moshe and Aaron, Moshe and Aaron, right? And suddenly it's Moshe and Yeshua? So, as Cerebus sees it, what happens is that Aaron decides to write his own chapter twenty-four where he's told to come up with Moshe "unto the Yookhwoh and worship ye a furr off." And "Then went up Moshe and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the Elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet, as it were a paved work of a Sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearnesse. And upon the Nobles of the children of Israel he layd not his hand: also they saw God, and did eate and drinke."



A picnic! With God! [laughs and laughs] That's crazy. God is an *invitable Spirit*. It's only when you read the next part—Moshe's chapter twenty-four—that you find out what *actually* happened. "And Moshe rose up, and his minister Yeshua: and Moshe went up into the mount of God. And hee saide unto the Elders, Tarye here for vs, untill we come againe vnto you: and behold, Aaron and Hur with you. If any man haue any matters to doe, let him come vnto them." [laughs] Bad choice of words, Moshe. Look at this.

Chapter twenty-five. Gold, silver, brass. Rams skins dyed red, badgers skins, Shittim wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil and sweet incense, onyx stones. An Ark made from Shittim wood, overlaid in pure gold, inside and out, topped off with a crown of gold. Four rings of gold, staves of Shittim wood, also overlaid with gold. A Mercy seat of pure gold, two Cherubims of pure gold. A table of Shittim wood, also overlaid with gold and also topped off with a crown of gold. Also with four gold rings. Also with staves made of Shittim wood, also overlaid with gold. Dishes, spoons, covers, bowls, all of pure gold. Candlestick of pure gold with six branches, knobs and branches of pure gold. Seven lamps of pure gold, snuff dishes of pure gold. [laughs] So! This is what God told them to do on the picnic. Look at chapter twenty-six. Ten curtains of fine twisted linen, blue and purple and scarlet. All of them coupled together with solid gold fastenings. This isn't a sanctuary. [laughs] This is either the world's gaudiest whorehouse or a saloon for [dangles his hand from his limp wrist]. Rams skins dyed red, badgers skins. Forty sockets of silver. Silver? Aaron must've decided to cut a few corners with the stuff you couldn't see. Oopsy, no. That can't be it: boards to hold up the curtains, overlaid with gold, bars to support the curtains overlaid with gold. A veil of blue and purple and scarlet [dangles his limp wrist, lisping] "with Cherubims shall it be made." Pillars of Shittim wood, overlaid with gold. Hooks of gold. Then? Chapter twenty-seven. The Altar. Eight feet long and four feet high. Brass this time but only because gold would melt. Cerebus is willing to bet. Brass horns, brass pans, brass shovels, brass basins, brass fleshhooks, brass firepans, brass grates, brass rings, brass staves. More fine, twined linen curtains [waving his limp wrists around in the air]

"A hundred cubits long!" Twenty pillars, more hangings of blue and purple and scarlet of fine, twined linen [flipping his limp wrist] "wrought with needle work." "And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oyle Olive beaten for the light, to cause the lampe to ascend up alwayes." This, as well, God evidently told them on the picnic. And then chapter twenty-eight. Turns out the next item on the agenda at "God's picnic" was "holy golden pincers" for Aaron and Nadab and Abihu. Ezzzzzz, and [thamar, Aaron's son, starts mimicing around the Sanctuary as he reads with his limp wrists flying]

Lisping: I have trouble writing it all down, I'm laughing so hard! "A breastplate, and an Ephod, and a robe, and a breasted coat, a Miter, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sonnes, that hee may minister vnto mee in the Priestes office. And they shall take gold and blew, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. And they shall make the Ephod of gold, of blew and of purple, of scarlet and fine twined linen, with cunning worke." [he finally cracks himself up and has to stop] It actually says that: "Cunning worke". Can you believe it? Gold, blue and purple and scarlet. Two onyx stones with the names of the tribes engraved on them. In gold settings, of course. Goes without saying. Two chains of pure gold, of [dangles his limp wrist] "wreathen worke". Breastplate of Judgment of gold and blue and purple and scarlet, fine twined linen. Four rows of stones [flapping his limp wrist up and down as he announces each one] A Sardius. A Topaz. A Carbuncle. An Emerald. A Sapphire. A Diamond. A Lygure. An Agate. An Amethyst. A Beryl. An Onix. A Jasper. All with gold fillings, of course. Two rings of gold on the breastplate. More wreathen work. Two rings of gold. "And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof, vnto the rings of the Ephod with a lace of blew, that it may be about the curious girdle..." Seriously. A "curious" girdle. "...of the Ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the Ephod." Oooh. We wouldn't want that to happen. Oh and this part! "And beneath vpon the hemme of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blew, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hemme thereof, and belles of gold betwene them round about. A golden bell and a pomegranate, vpon the hemme of the robe round about. And it shall be vpon Aaron, to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in vnto the holy before the Yeehwhoo, and when he cometh out, that he die not." [laughs] Except maybe of embarrassment. And then he gets another plate of pure gold on "a blew lace" on the Miter. "And it shall be vpon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may beare the iniquities of the holy things." The iniquity of the holy things. [laughs] It's not as if Yeehwhoo wasn't completely up-front about what she was doing. And coats and hats and bells and whistles all of fine blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen. Okay. Then Chapter twenty-nine. The first of Yeehwhoo's many favourite mutilated cattle recipes which is the part Aaron was waiting for since—like everyone else—he was tired of eating the maaaa, the little light dried bread lumps that they were all living off of. By the way, you'll notice over the next few chapters that the Hebrew people who aren't Aaron and his sons start going a little nutty. Which, considering all they had to eat were these little bread/wafer lumps while over in the Sanctuary Aaron and his sons were filling the camp with the smell of barbecued prime rib and tenderloin [laughs], well, the only real surprise is that everyone didn't go crazier than they did. Let's see, what other goodies did Aaron get at his "picnic with God"? Oh right, everyone has to pay half a shekel, each, as a "ransom for his soules" to Aaron and his sons. Oh, and then, of course, Aaron and his sons [dangles his limp wrist] want the Sanctuary to smell good. Five hundred shekels worth of pure myrrh, sweet cinnamon [flipping his limp wrist] "half so much," two hundred and fifty shekels worth of sweet calamus, five hundred shekels worth of Cassia. [laughs] They must've been glad that someone remembered to bring a pen and paper to God's picnic. So! They mix all this perfume gunk together with a quart of olive oil and use it to anoint the Tabernacle, the Ark, the table, all the junk on the table, Aaron, his sons. But [stamps his foot petulantly], no one else gets any. Just Aaron and his sons. And then another perfume, this time Stacte, Onicha, Galbanum, with pure frankincense. This one belongs to dear Yeehwhoo, only. Anybody else tries making some—even just to smell it—and they get kicked out, permanently. You've never been married either, have you?

Me:

Me? Yeah, I have. I was married for almost five years. Happiest two years of my life. Nyuck nyuck nyuck.



OF COURSE
ON THE **OTHER**
HAND...

...HOW COULD
ANYONE
TELL?

TELL:
CONSIDERING THAT
HE ALMOST NEVER
TOOK OFF THAT
35

HEY!

WHAT IS

YOU'RE JUST ⁴/₄
FLIPPING
THROUGH
THE TRANSCRIPTS

100

6

I GOT INTERESTED
IN WHAT YOU WERE SAYING
ABOUT KONIGSBERG

I DID READ
STRAIGHT THROUGH
TO THE END OF

HEX HEX HEX

NOW WHAT
ARE YOU
LAUGHING
ABOUT?

HAHAHA
PEOPLE!

PEOPLE'S

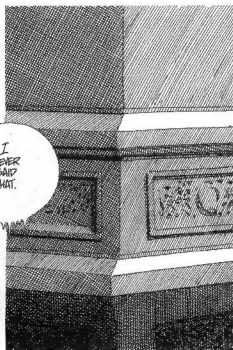
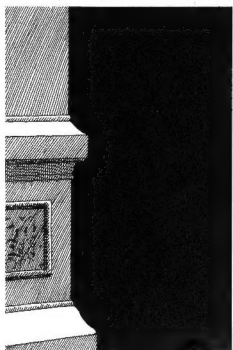
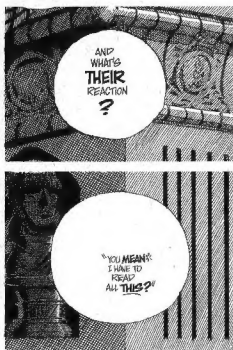
IN WHAT
WAY? HOW DO
YOU MEAN?

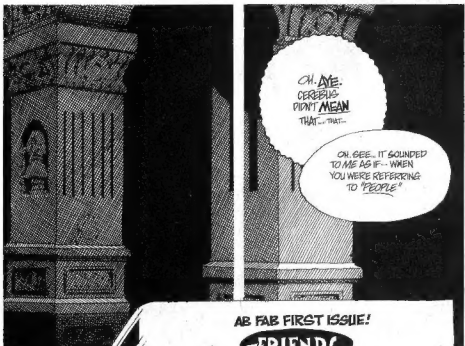
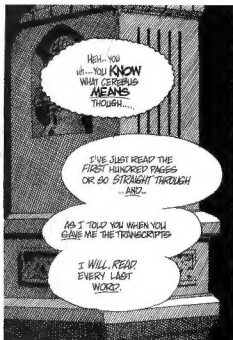
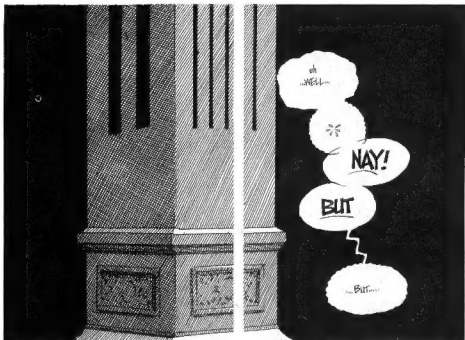
Cerebus:
Nyuck nyuck nyuck. So you know about women and "their" perfume.

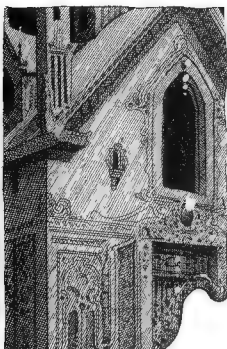
Me:
Oh, yeah.

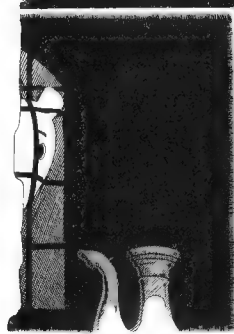
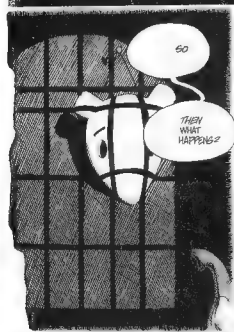
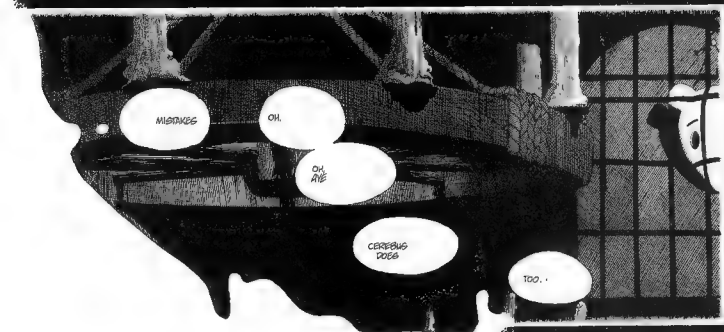
Cerebus:

Oh, Kos! So that brings us to the end of Aaron's shopping... [Laughs]...pillage. And then in chapter thirty-one, we find out what the heck has been going on in the last six chapters. "And the Yoishvosek spoke unto Moshe, saying, See, I have called by name, Bezalel, the sonne of Uri, the sonne of Hur, of the tribe of Judah" (Aha! There's the little Irvit-writer again. There's the little bit who was so glibly his limp wrist *handy* with a needle and thread and did such "coming work" in gold, silver, blue and purple and scarlet. [Laughs, surprise. He turns out to be the great grandson of Hur, the guy Moshe left behind *adone* to Aaron to "mind the store," saying "If any man have any matters to doe, let him come unto them." Of course Moshe didn't mean, "If anybody has any good ideas about how to...redo...the Tabernacle and Aaron and his sons in 'Whorehouse Egyptian Modern' and wants to open a 'Levites-only' barbecue, by all means, consider the people's lot to be your lot. Knock yourself out." And, of course, Moshe said "any man," so, obviously Bezalel was, judging by appearances, getting by on a technically. But, obviously, none of that was what Bezalel was for Aaron or Aaron was for him. And, according to verse six, Bezalel was the son of Ooliab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. There is no question that these two were going to be the envy of lavender-scented interior decorators for generations to come.











Cast
(in order of appearance)

KONIGSBERG himself
CEREBUS himself

KONIGSBERG himself
CEREBUS himself
ME myself
GOD Himself
GUY with razer strap Rocky Balboa
OTHER GUY with razer strap Konigsberg's agent
DIFFERENT GUY with razer strap Konigsberg's dentist
GUY NEXT TO HIM with razer strap Konigsberg's Dad
GUY BEHIND HIM with razer strap Konigsberg's butcher
GUY BEHIND THAT GUY with razer strap Konigsberg's cousin
TINY GUY with razer strap Konigsberg's tailor
EVEN TINIER GUY with razer strap Konigsberg's bookie
YOOHWHOO himself/herself/itself

GUY BEHIND HIM with razer strap Konigsberg's butcher
GUY BEHIND THAT GUY with razer strap Konigsberg's cousin
TINY GUY with razer strap Konigsberg's tailor
EVEN TINIER GUY with razer strap Konigsberg's hookie
YOOHWHOO himself/herself/itself
LOUIS LASSO Louis-Lasso Mary Hartman
ANNIE HALL Diane Hall
JOHN FITZGERALD BEATTY Mr. Annette Benning
GIRLS OF FRUITCAKE PARK 16 Top Fashion Models
MR. SYNOD Mr. Snoid™
HARPIE Aline Laundry™
VILLAGE BOYS Rick Veitch
Tom Veitch
Kirby Veitch
Kim Deitch
SCARY GUY Death

Why Canada Slept

*Of course we don't want to have a
big fight there.*

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien
"explaining" Canada's foreign policy
vis-à-vis preparations for the war on terrorism in
Afghanistan in the fall of 2001

*We are not going to send our people into
a condition in which they are unwelcome.*

Defence Minister Art Eggleton
"explaining" Canada's military policy
vis-à-vis preparations for the war on terrorism in
Afghanistan in the fall of 2001

*So they go on in strange paradox,
deciding only to be undecided.*

Winston Churchill chastising the
government of the day in 1936.

Mindful of a central, inescapable facet of left liberal quasi-socialist human nature—a facet which informs, underpins and overarches what passes for their philosophy and which is best expressed by one of their most revered and widely admired commentators upon the social scene, Thumper the Rabbit who famously remarked: "If you don't got nothin' nice to say, don't say nothin' at all"...

[That Thumper's advice finds its most succinct and practical application in the amputation of the tongues of political dissidents in Iraq who speak out against Saddam Hussein or his relatives would be problematic for left liberal quasi-socialists if their philosophy was based on sequential thought. Fortunately for them sequential thought is anathema, thus allowing them to preserve intact their peculiar notions of (as an example) co-equivalent legitimacy between a theocratic dictatorship and a vanguard democracy while simultaneously allowing them to suppress, marginalize, belittle, ridicule and (primarily) ignore any expression or idea which does not genuflect to their left liberal quasi-socialist totems (atheism, feminism, socialism, pacifism, multiculturalism, environmentalism, appeasement, et al.). For those of us who see as self-evident a clear demarcation between good ("not amputating tongues") and evil ("amputating tongues"), there is a lunatic "Alice in Wonderland" quality involved in having—out of even-handedness—to qualify clear-sightedness by acknowledging the existence of the dissenting left liberal quasi-socialist viewpoint which holds that disapproving of tongue amputations and taking military action against those who perform tongue amputations is just another example of Eurocentric patriarchal cultural insensitivity—a wrong, in the left liberal quasi-socialist scheme of things, which far outweighs whatever inconvenience or discomfort might be experienced by those individuals who have had or will have their tongues amputated.]

...it is a convention of the modern conservative essayist to reserve his most optimistic look on the "bright side" for the final installment or concluding paragraphs of his observations. That is to say, in order to get even the pretence of a fair hearing of your views from left liberal, quasi-socialists, one has to end on an optimistic note which requires (if one is not oneself a left liberal, quasi-socialist) that one

effectively undercut and undermine one's own argument by, for all intents and purposes, *capitulating* to left liberal, quasi-socialist tribal shibboleths in order not be dismissed out of hand as a "crank," a "nutcase" or an "extremist," thus framing the debate on the adversary's own terms and according to the adversary's prejudices undue validity (i.e. the left liberal quasi-socialist mythology that where there exist two extreme viewpoints, the truth lies somewhere between them. In this case, at the one extreme would be the belief that it is institutionally evil and indefensible to amputate people's tongues for expressing viewpoints which dissent from those of the ruling authorities and that those authorities should be deposed of by whatever means necessary and, on the other extreme, by the belief that tongue amputations are part of the multicultural mosaic of our global village and should be embraced and nurtured and understood by assembling conferences under UN auspices and by financing studies and reports by international Non-Governmental Organizations with upbeat, empowering titles like "Tongue Amputations in Emergent Societies: Something Nice to Say". And that the truth lies somewhere between the outright "baby with the bathwater," redneck, uninformed knee-jerk opposition to tongue amputations, and the informed, well-educated and well-read understanding of tongue amputations within their socio-economic, cultural and historic milieu and context). Put another way, granting validity to the view that there exist gray areas between Good and Evil is the first step down the slippery slope into the quagmire inhabited by left liberal quasi-socialists wherein Good and Evil are meaningless and arbitrary terms—and that the gray areas between are all that actually exist, the firmament within which (in the left liberal quasi-socialist view) we *all* (not just deluded left liberal quasi-socialists) enact our mortal existences.

After a certain amount of consideration, I've decided that it is no longer practical in debate to concede an inch of philosophical territory in this way since (as can be seen in our society at large) acknowledging left liberal quasi-socialist mythologies—even in passing—serves only to reinforce for left liberal quasi-socialists their more central prejudices and misapprehensions. That is, when one acknowledges the *existence* of the delusional "thinking" of the "members opposite"—that we are all basically the same, whether we are a dog, a lesbian, a houseplant or the Pope; that there is more that unites us than divides us; that the largest and most noble enterprise upon which we are embarked as a society is the reduction of that society to a squishy interchangeable gray societal lump where all morality is relative, all ethics are situational and "judgment" and "discrimination" are terms which possess meaning only in their pejorative sense—experience tells us that left liberal quasi-socialists "screen out" all further observation and rest their gossamer and pixy dust hopes on the fact, because someone like myself is able to *comprehend* their viewpoint, there springs hope eternal that I will one day "see the light" (or rather the squishy interchangeable gray societal lump) and as the Clown rather famously remarked from the sewer in Stephen King's *IT* "Join us! Down here we...float!"

Given that I am staking out the "extreme right" position here—tongue amputations are evil and those who commit them should be removed from power by whatever means necessary—and that I cannot, either in good conscience and/or for political effect, pretend to find anything nice to say about tongue amputations (or sulphuric acid baths, genital electro-shock, nerve gas or the other forms of torture practiced by Saddam Hussein and his thugs), I've decided to skip ahead in my file of news clippings to "Canada's Military Today," choosing to balance my presentation not along the lines endemic to this country's feminist dictatorship ("Something Nice to Say about Tongue Amputations") but by taking a few pages in the midst of explaining my views on "Why Canada Slept" to acknowledge those areas (few as they may be, and they are, indeed, few) where my country is and has been fully awake and is and has been discharging its national "grown up" obligations on the world stage despite the best efforts of a succession of hollowed-out-ventriloquist-puppet-husband Prime Ministers from Quebec to make the discharging of those obligations as difficult as it has been humanly possible to make them. "Balance" is, perhaps, an inaccurate term, given that a genuine balance would consist of several installments devoted to the hard work and idealism of Canada's military and its leadership and several installments devoted to the feminists, left liberal quasi-socialists and hollowed-out-ventriloquist-puppet-husband Prime Ministers (and their acolytes) who oppose them. Unfortunately, the actions and the deeds of the latter group are, in my view, in far greater need of exposure and denunciation than the former are in need of acknowledgement and applause. It is worth noting that those who see "heroism" in the actions of those professions (soldiers and policemen) most fully concerned with maintaining the security of the Good against the omnipresent threat of the Evil are usually to be found in the ranks of left liberal quasi-socialists (as we saw in the aftermath of 11 September). Soldiers and policemen don't,

with few exceptions, see themselves as heroic. They see themselves as taking on the necessary and often unpleasant tasks which need to be done in any society to provide safety and security to its citizens. Acknowledgement and applause only embarrass them and they are far more concerned with being given the tools necessary to accomplish the tasks that society asks of them (or that, at least, society not actively oppose them: or that if society finds it necessary to oppose them that society at least not hamstring them). This usually impels left liberal quasi socialists to add "super-human modesty" to "heroism," further misunderstanding what a soldier *is*, what a policeman *is* and compounding the level of embarrassment on the part of the soldier and the policeman (even as the left liberal quasi-socialists set about the task of opposing soldiers and policemen and hamstringing their efforts to guard our safety and security).

But, for the moment, a little acknowledgement and applause is in order, if for no other reason than to help get the bad left liberal quasi-socialist taste out of my mouth—for one installment, anyway—before it's time to return to the shameful feminist taint and degradation which infests the government of my country at its very highest echelons.

* * * * *

There was, a few months ago, a tempest-in-a-teapot in Canadian media circles (which has a surpassing fondness for tempests in its teapots) over the policy of Southam News, a chain of Canadian newspapers, mandating the publication of editorials sent down from head-office-on-high in the pages of those newspapers which it owns (one of which is the *National Post*, the paper I read). I had noticed that the *Post* occasionally ran editorials that seemed more than a little "squishy" and better suited to the "squishier-than-thou" editorial pages of the *Toronto Star* or the *Globe & Mail* (who regularly attempt to "out-squish" each other), but hadn't really thought anything of it apart from chalking it up to a temporary lapse of common sense to which we are all of us—yes, even conservatives—susceptible. Once the controversy hit the front pages, of course, and I understood where the "squishiness" was coming from, I would just check the accreditation line at the end of any editorial that seemed to contain more than the minimum daily adult allowance of gossamer and pixie dust and, sure enough, it would say "Southam News".

So it came as something of a pleasant surprise when a rather astute piece entitled "Defence shouldn't be based on miracles" appeared over the "Southam News" by-line last year shortly after the deployment of our 750-soldier contingent to Afghanistan. In keeping with my own policy of giving credit where it is due and especially when it comes from an unlikely source, I thought I would quote some of it before getting to the (to me, anyway) inspiring stories of Canada's military today:

Government's core business is internal order and external protection, but for years, Canada's peacetime preparedness has been the despair of its allies and its citizens alike.

Instead of giving the Canadian Forces priority, successive administrations routinely robbed defence to pay for other programs, relying on the United States for continental protection, and American and European allies for global security.

Meanwhile, the Armed Forces were used to advance social agendas of no military importance, at the expense of real soldiering. Firm handling of the Airborne's disciplinary problems [soldiers attached to one of Canada's Airborne divisions were involved in the beating death of a Somali teenager during Canada's participation in the—I think we're probably all agreed by now—completely ill-advised UN peacekeeping mission to that country], for instance, would have been a far more militarily useful measure than setting quotas for the recruitment of visible minorities or mandating that women serve on submarines. But the fighting regiment was disbanded, while \$1-million was spent to develop a combat bra for Canada's 5, 500 enlisted women.

In a December interview, Jean Chrétien, the Prime Minister, wrote off criticism of Canada's military unpreparedness as stooges for companies making and selling weapons. That was an egregious slight to a proud army with real needs.

A country that values its sovereignty must invest significantly more than does Canada in self-protection. The \$11.2-billion allocated to defence represents just 1.1% of our gross domestic product. This compares to 3.2% for the United States, 2.7% for Great Britain and 2.5% for France. Even Portugal spends 2.6%. In NATO, only Luxembourg spends less. December's so-called security budget with \$1.2-

billion to national defence over three [five, actually] years, was a start but does not do nearly enough.

As the new Deputy Prime Minister John Manley acknowledged last fall, when he was foreign affairs minister, Canada has freeloaded off its allies for decades. Here's hoping he and his colleagues walk that talk. As Canadian troops place themselves in harm's way to protect Western societies from terrorism, it should be acknowledged Canada has also freeloaded off its soldiers, giving them a knife and telling them to prepare for a gunfight.

It won't do. Canadians cheering our troops on their way must assume the obligation to compel the government to buy the equipment and above all hire the men and women it takes.

Every successful operation shouldn't be a little miracle.

Part IV

From "I'm up there...protecting my country" by Chris Wattie, the *National Post* 31 August 02:

Within minutes of terrorists crashing airliners into the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, Canadian CF-18s were airborne. And for almost a year since then, the fighters, based in Bagotville, Quebec, and Cold Lake, Alberta have been quietly patrolling Canadian skies, guarding against another terrorist attack.

Major Paul Prevost, 425 "Alouette" Squadron's deputy commander: "We've been at the highest readiness we can be at, 24-7. There's been so many events...we're so spooled up since Sept. 11 that anything that doesn't look normal [in North American airspace], we'll have some sort of reaction to it."

They do it all from what the pilots call "the Q"—short for QRA, or Quick Reaction Area—a small, rundown Cold War-era building attached to a pair of hangars at the lonely end of Bagotville's airstrip.

There, in surroundings only marginally more modern than the shacks used by Spitfire pilots during the Battle of Britain, the pilots and ground crew take turns living, eating and sleeping within metres of their fully fuelled and armed CF-18s. Shifts can last as long as a week at a time, which is hard on the married pilots with families.

"We live here 24 hours at a time," Maj. Prevost says, looking at the bare cot where he sleeps next to a telephone connected directly to the squadron's operations office.

"If the bell goes off in the middle of the night, you'll see the guys up and running pretty quick," he adds with a smile.

Maj. Prevost says the pilots can be suited up and in the air in a matter of minutes. From Bagotville, the CF-18s can race to almost anywhere in central Canada at their top speed of Mach 1.8 (up to 2,100 km/hr) within 10 minutes.

The pilots have been called out hundreds of times during the past year, racing to the cockpit and firing up the CF-18s' massive engines, even if they often go no further than "sitting on the button," waiting at the end of Bagotville's runway for the call to take off.

"A lot of times, I've been sitting in that jet for four hours waiting for the call to take off and do an intercept," Maj. Prevost says. "And you're thinking about what your reaction's going to be...Will you have to shoot down an airliner?"

"The decision is not really up to the pilot. If the order comes for me to shoot down an airliner, I know there is a long, long line of people who've been involved in that decision. There's no way somebody out of the blue can take the decision and tell me to shoot down an airliner.

"If the order comes to me and I can authenticate that order, I will carry out the job: That's what we're trained to do. If you ask me, personally, it's something I don't want to do. It's something no one wants to do. You don't want to have to live with that..."

The pilots of 425 Squadron, like many of the Canadian and U.S. fighter pilots flying patrols over North American airspace, put themselves in the shoes of the anonymous F-16 pilots who was on his way to intercept the second jet that was flown into the World Trade Centre. The U.S. jet was only minutes away from the airliner when it slammed into the tower.

"If that pilot could've made it on time, he would've killed maybe 300 people, but he would've saved so many lives."

Major Robert Larocque, 41, is the deputy operations officer for 3 Wing, one of the overall co-

ordinators for the squadrons' work since Sept. 11. He's responsible for the skies over all of Eastern Canada, from the Manitoba-Ontario border to the Grand Banks off Newfoundland.

"We can cover a lot of airspace; that's the beauty of fighters."

Any of the wing's roughly 30 CF-18s can be called out by NORAD headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colo., which would forward any alert to the Canadian government and to the joint Canada-U.S. air defence system's regional headquarters in Winnipeg.

The fighters take their direct orders from an underground complex in North Bay, Ontario, where controllers and technicians at the Canadian Forces sector air operations centre guide them to intercept suspicious aircraft and co-ordinate their actions once they arrive.

Earlier this year, fighters from Bagotville were scrambled to intercept an Air-India flight that had reported problems with passengers. The trouble turned out to be a pair of rowdies who were quickly subdued, but the Canadian fighters still escorted the airliner all the way to U.S. airspace, ready to shoot it down if necessary.

Maj. Larocque says that since Sept. 11, NORAD fighters have flown more than 2,000 sorties "of which 300 were real scrambles [sorties launched to meet a potential threat]. Prior to that, in 2000, we did maybe 140 sorties, of which 15 were real scrambles. That's a big leap."

He shrugs expressively when asked how long he expects the wing to remain on guard. "Could be for five years, 10 years: We don't know. Personally, I don't see us going away from this operation for a long time."

Brigadier-General Dave Jurowski, 57, a retired air force fighter pilot, says the CF-18 pilots' long stint on guard duty over North America has been slowly wearing them down.

"It's more boring than anything else," he says of the NORAD alert duty. "Yet it causes pressures, no question.

"They've had the enormous responsibility of protecting all of us from some lunatic who's hijacked a plane, and that's a burden...It wears on you."

The Canadian Forces is short of fighter pilots—425 Squadron has about 80% of the number of fliers it should have—and its CF-18s are long overdue for an upgrade of their airborne electronics and radar.

The CF-18s, purchased in 1982, are getting major improvements to their radios, radars and electronics systems in a four-year \$900-million modernization program.

But to pay for the upgrades, the Canadian Forces has embarked on a program that will see a third of its current fleet of fighters moth-balled to pay for the upgrades on the remainder of the fleet.

Brig.-Gen. Jurowski, himself a former CF-18 pilot, says Canadian pilots have an excellent reputation in NATO and NORAD circles but they are being let down by their government.

Even if the federal government ignores them, Brig.-Gen. Jurowski says he believes most Canadians know what their air forces pilots are doing.

"They're watching the skies like hawks, and I think the public knows that and appreciates it."

Maj. Prevost has noticed a change in attitude among the people in the Saguenay area over which the base's fighters regularly fly training missions. "A year ago, flying over town would get us noise complaints. Now, people will call up and thank us.

"People walk up to us in the street and say, 'Hey, we're glad you're up there.'"

And he says his pilots have more pride in their job since Sept. 11.

"We can make a difference and now we're ready," he says. "I'm a Canadian fighter pilot and now I can brag about that. I'm up there flying NORAD [patrols] protecting my country."

From "Long hours take toll on families of CF-18 crews" by Chris Wattie (*National Post* 31 August 02):

For the past year, Sergeant Louis Garceau has seen more of the innards of a CF-18 than he has of his wife and four children.

Sgt. Garceau, one of the crew chiefs for 425 Squadron's more than 100 technicians and aircraft mechanics, has been working 12 hours a day since the Canadian Forces fighter squadron went on alert on Sept. 11.

"The families have hurt, it's true," he says. "My wife understands, but sometimes my youngest kids want to know why I'm not home a lot of the time, 'cause I'm here working at my job.

"It's hard, but we have to do it...We have to maintain our aircraft."

Major Paul Prevost, one of the 17 pilots on the squadron, says the year of vigilance has taken its toll.

"There are so few pilots out there and there's a lot of training to be done. For a lot of guys, it's been tough. There's no more single guys on the squadron: We have one single guy out of 17 pilots. The rest are all married, a lot of them with babies."

Corporal Marc Bilodeau, one of the squadron's aircraft mechanics, has been working on CF-18s day and night since Sept. 11.

"We're proud of the way we're putting the aircraft outside, ready to go. It's our job to put them out there and it's good when you see everything going the way it should. You don't mind the sweat when you see those aircraft on the line.

"We know those guys are up flying because we did our job," he says. "And the pilots are really good about telling us: 'Hey, good job.'"

The CF-18 has tens of thousands of parts and keeping them in top condition is a 'demanding and time-consuming job.

Cpl. Bilodeau, 36, says his irregular—and long—hours have been hard on his girlfriend and the wives and children of his comrades.

"It's tough on the family: We need good girls and good kids to put with all the times we are away. A lot of my friends have children and everything, and that's hard. I give the families a thumbs-up, 'cause they've all been great."

From "Inside NORAD's mountain fortress" by Sheldon Alberts (*National Post* 19 October 02):

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, Major-General Rick Findley was nearing the end of a 12-hour shift deep inside this Rocky Mountain military bunker [NORAD headquarters inside Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado]—the "Sentinel of the High Frontier"—when the first of two hijacked jetliners slammed into the World Trade Center. Maj. Gen. Findley—a Canadian—found himself in charge of scrambling hundreds of jet fighters to protect American citizens during the worst attack on U.S. soil since Pearl Harbor.

"I wouldn't say we got caught flat-footed, but we were surprised," Maj.-Gen. Findley reflects in an interview. "No one anticipated, ever, that you would be flying some kind of patrol with fighter aircraft in North American airspace. But on the end of Sept. 11 we had combat air patrols established throughout North America wondering a little bit what was coming next."

Before Sept. 11, NORAD had only 20 fighter jets—including four Canadian CF-18s—available to fly patrols or scramble to intercept air threats. The number was increased immediately to 200 armed fighters on Sept. 11, and although fewer jets are on standby now, "you can rest assured that the days of having 20 aircraft on alert will never happen again in my lifetime," says Canadian Maj. Doug Martin, who was also in Cheyenne Mountain on Sept. 11.

Combat air patrol became a normal part of NORAD operations, with 25,000 sorties flown in North America since Sept. 11, 2001. That compares to 140 in 2000. Fighter jets have been scrambled 380 times and more than 400 combat air patrols have been diverted to investigate threats ranging from disturbances on commercial airliners to suspicious civilian aircraft flight patterns.

An official from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) now works alongside NORAD officials inside the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center.

In addition to the 116 radars on the periphery of the United States and Canada, NORAD is now connected to the FAA and Nav Canada radar that monitors air traffic inside the continent.

"What our general has told us," says U.S. Air Force Lieut. Col. Bill Glover, director of NORAD's air warning centre, "is that there is no problem too small any more. We have to go and investigate."

On Oct. 1, the United States launched its new Northern Command (NORTHCOM), the military structure responsible for protecting America and its interests from air, land and sea attacks. NORTHCOM has an area of responsibility that includes Canada and Mexico and operates alongside NORAD personnel at shared headquarters at Peterson Air Force Base and the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center near Colorado Springs.

NORTHCOM, a U.S.-only command, remains separate and distinct from NORAD. But the lines are necessarily blurry. U.S. Air Force General Ed Eberhart serves as both the commander of NORTHCOM and the commander-in-chief of NORAD. Officers from both commands mingle over lunch at the cafeteria on Peterson Air Force base. And at Cheyenne Mountain, NORTHCOM's domestic events officer—who is responsible for detecting terrorist threats within the United States—sits next to a Canadian colonel, Wad Hoddinhott, NORAD's command centre director.

"Here in the mountain, we always work as one team. As a command director, I am a Canadian in charge of running the mountain," says Col. Hoddinhott. "But the addition of NORTHCOM does make it interesting. Canada is not a partner or player in NORTHCOM. But as director of the command centre, [the NORTHCOM officer] reports in the chain to me."

The central role of Canada's NORAD personnel on Sept. 11 has become a key part of arguments about more military cooperation with the United States. The fact that two Canadians—Maj.-Gen. Findley and Navy Captain Mike Jellinek—were the senior officers in Cheyenne Mountain on Sept. 11 has been cited as evidence Canada will not be considered subordinate to U.S. forces at times of emergency.

The two Canadians guided the actions of U.S. personnel inside the mountain bunker, which was built in the 1960s to sustain a 30-megatonne nuclear blast. On Sept. 11, uncertain about the full nature and extent of the threat, NORAD personnel closed a pair of 25-tonne steel blast doors for several hours, locking everyone inside the 15-building complex. It was the first time the doors had been shut because of a threat.

"If you had walked into that command centre or into the NORAD battle management centre on Sept. 11, you would have been very hard-pressed except for the flags on the soldiers to determine who were the Canadians and who were the Americans," says Maj.-Gen. Findley. "We are held in high enough regard that the deputy commander of NORAD and the director of operations is a Canadian. The trust is there and we haven't let anybody down."

"When I look at members of the staff, I am colour [sic]-blind in terms of whether or not they have a Canadian uniform on or a U.S. uniform on. I am just interested in competence. And I see no difference in competence as these people serve," Gen. Eberhart, the NORAD commander-in-chief, said in an interview. "So, tough decisions were made that day and they were made by Canadians and Americans alike. It shows this co-operation and how this relationship has matured and how our ability to deal with this asymmetric threat evolved."

The debate surrounding the increased military co-operation between Canada and the United States has intensified dramatically since last April, when the Bush administration first announced plans for NORTHCOM. There has been pressure on Ottawa, primarily from U.S. and Canadian military officials, to consider expanding its role in continental defence beyond NORAD to include formal co-operation between naval and land forces. The idea was widely denounced by Liberal [emphasis mine] backbenchers and Canadian nationalists who fear that placing Canada's troops or naval ships under direct U.S. command could threaten the nation's sovereignty.

For Canadian officers attached to NORAD in Colorado, concerns that such agreements would threaten Canada's sovereignty are understandable but largely misplaced.

"Much more influence can be achieved if you are part of something rather than being distant from it," says Maj.-Gen. Findley. He compares greater co-operation on continental defence to a "neighbourhood watch... The reality is that we are very well respected and a trusted part of this bi-national arrangement. My opinion is never discounted. We bring a different perspective often to different issues and events that they haven't thought about. I don't find us being subsumed."

Since the NORAD agreement was signed in 1957, Canada and the U.S. have shared responsibility for protection of the continent from air and aerospace attack. NORAD's commander-in-chief is an American. The deputy commander is always a Canadian.

"The mere fact that NORAD has been historically commanded by a four-star American general causes some people some concern," says Canadian Lieut.-Gen. Pennie, NORAD's current deputy commander. "But it actually makes sense to have an American in charge and a Canadian deputy because 90% of the assets are coming from the United States, and some of the biggest issues we have to deal with are in Washington, D.C. For a Canadian to deal with those issues in Washington, D.C. is a bit problematic. So it is a good balance. It works fine."

There have been periodic tensions with the U.S. over the air defence partnership, as when

NORAD was put on full alert during the Cuban missile crisis without consultation of the Canadian government. [This, I believe, was the actual underpinning of the feud between JFK and then Prime Minister John Diefenbaker—who had signed the NORAD agreement with President Eisenhower—that I mentioned last issue. Diefenbaker was basically sulking because he hadn't been consulted about the NORAD full alert and withheld Canadian support for the "quarantine" of Cuba as a result. To JFK this must've seemed the most inconceivable contravention of common sense and fundamental disloyalty from an American ally—a conclusion with which I am unable to disagree—and resolved that Diefenbaker had to go. Which he helped arrange by assisting Lester Pearson in the Canadian election the following year.] [as a personal aside, this was the only time my mother ever took any overt action in the realm of politics, writing a letter to the Prime Minister expressing her fundamental disagreement with his failure to support the American president's defence of the North American continent. Way to go, mum] *But even those skeptical of increased military co-operation admit they are hard-pressed to find fault with Canada's role in NORAD.*

Lieut.-Gen. Pennie, NORAD's deputy commander, says it is premature to suggest that the NORAD agreement will be expanded to include naval and land forces co-operation. The agreement does not come up for renewal until 2006.

"I wouldn't rule that out as a possibility. But that is a few years away," Lieut.-Gen. Pennie says. "We would still have a Canadian decision before anyone came into Canada and a U.S. decision before Canadian troops went south."

From "Canada has led naval search for al-Qaeda" by Matthew Fraser (*National Post* 27 September 02):

When smugglers and fleeing Taliban are stopped at sea by HMCS St. John's, often the first Canadian voice that they hear is that of Corporal Keith Muffty, a Pakistani-born supply technician who speaks five languages and may find himself querying a terrorist or a boatload of refugees barely clinging to life.

"They cannot believe someone coming from a Canadian ship can speak to them in their own language," says the 45-year-old corporal, a Christian who fled his homeland because of persecution and settled in Winnipeg.

He speaks flawless English, Punjabi and Hindi, along with rusty Urdu and some Arabic picked up during eight years working in the oilfields of Oman and Abu Dhabi.

"They always ask me how I learned it. They think I'm an Indian...I don't know if it is because I can speak the language, but every time we board, those we meet have been very co-operative."

The diminutive Cpl. Muffty is an important part of Canada's war on terrorism. Although most of the attention has been paid to those Canadian soldiers who came under fire in Afghanistan, there are 1,350 Canadian sailors and airmen in the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea.

Warships like the St. John's have been hunting for terrorists here since last fall. And for almost as long, Canadian Aurora surveillance aircraft have been flying eight-to-14-hour missions daily over a swath of ocean that extends from Iraq to India, while venerable C-130 Hercules transports move equipment and supplies across the region.

"The navy and the air force are understandably disappointed to not have had that much media coverage," says Brigadier-General Michel Gauthier, who commands the Canadian task force from his base at U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Fla. "But it is not an overstatement to say that Canada has led the coalition's naval search for al-Qaeda and Taliban members over the last 11 months."

The group is run by Commodore Dan Murphy from a darkened operations room in the St. John's. It is crammed with computer screens showing the location of every ship and plane in the region—he also has tactical control of up to six coalition warships and more than 1,000 coalition sailors, plus any reconnaissance planes that fly over the Gulf of Oman, known popularly as "The GOO."

"There are thousands of people out in the water here every day," says the Commodore, sitting in his war room, as a radio in his wardroom crackles with the latest news from the bridge, from which dozens of freighters and dhows are hailed every day.

"Some...are doing legal things. Some aren't. Smuggling has been a big part of commerce here for centuries. The people who ply these waters are sometimes migrant workers, sometimes

smugglers and sometimes terrorists.

"Everything seemed suspicious to us when we got here. There were guys out there all over the place at night without their lights on. When you look for a terrorist you are looking for something abnormal, but at the beginning everything seemed abnormal to us."

"We ask them if they have weapons," says Cpl. Muffy. "Even if they do, they won't say so, of course. But very few of them could afford weapons. They are just poor immigrants seeking a better life."

To increase their chances of success, the coalition's warships never stop moving around the GOO according to ever-changing patterns worked out by Commodore Murphy and his staff.

"Ninety-nine per cent of this is about deterrence," says Cmdr. Ryan. "Only 1% is about actually catching somebody."

The Canadians' biggest catch came this summer when sailors from HMCS Athabasca nabbed four al-Qaeda members. The suspected terrorists were transferred to U.S. aircraft carriers before being flown to the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

For the Canadian sailors, however, the biggest challenge is the extreme heat that settles on the Arabian peninsula between May and October.

The skin of helicopters can easily reach several hundred degrees Celsius, burning mechanics obliged to be out in the midday sun. Even far out at sea the humidex reading has been in the 50s for weeks at a time, making any work on deck debilitating and obliging engineers to keep a close eye on the ship's temperature-sensitive high-tech gear.

"When the navy headed out last fall nobody was thinking long-term," says Commodore Murphy. "It was about dealing with the issue as we then saw it. And that was the right thing to do. We got fully booted for a multi-threat environment in only 10 days."

"We then had to reassess. It was a question of how long we could keep this up. That was not just about being in-theatre, but maintaining the supply chain coming from home, too. It was decided to go to a steady state of three ships. This is what we can sustain until at least October, 2004."

Although Osama bin Laden and many of his top lieutenants have not yet been found, Brig.-Gen. Gauthier defends the U.S.-led coalition's war on terror and Canada's part in it.

"How do you define success?" he asks. "[U.S. Central Command] does not just view this as capturing bin Laden. Afghanistan was harbouring a significant number of terrorists. The ruling organization there is not the threat it was."

"Al-Qaeda's capacity to train or stage out of Afghanistan is far less than it was eight or 10 months ago. The danger level for the Afghan population is not what it was. They are better off than they were. So some success has been achieved. But it's not over by a long shot."

That's why the Canadian navy expects to be in the GOO or nearby waters for the foreseeable future.

"My take on it," says Commodore Murphy, "is that as long as the coalition is in Afghanistan and al-Qaeda and the Taliban have scurried off to hide, there will be something important to be done out here."

From a February letter printed on the *National Post* editorial page under the heading "Navy impress-
es":

While there is much merit in Douglas Bland's proposal for a Canadian Forces expeditionary and multinational command capability, his dismissal that "there is no high value payoff...in providing redundant capabilities to USN carrier battle groups" displays an amazing unawareness of the capabilities of the modern Canadian Navy (*Defences that Impress Friends and Enemies*, Feb. 28).

First, when the U.S. call for help came on Thanksgiving, Canada was extremely fortunate to have a navy ready to deploy within a week.

Second, they did it with a complete task group, comprising a command destroyer, frigates and a multi-role replenishment ship.

Third, the capabilities provided are far from redundant: The U.S. Navy is desperately short of frigates, and the tanker is doing overtime supplying all the other navies.

Finally, there are very few navies that can deploy so quickly to the other side of the world. Ours can because of the inherent capabilities needed to patrol Canada's offshore exclusive economic

zone (some 6,000,000sq. km). The payoff in this instance is that the United States has assigned one of its own task groups to be commanded by the in-theatre Canadian commodore, a remarkable recognition of Canadian competence and sovereignty.

Indeed, that sounds a lot like an "expeditionary and multi-national command capability."

Lieutenant-Commander Richard Gimblett,
Blackburn Hamlet, Ontario

From "Americans learn 'these guys are very, very good'" by Chris Wattie (*National Post* 18 September 02):

Seen through the sights of a McMillan "Tac-50," the Canadian Forces' long-range sniper rifle of choice, a target almost a kilometer away looks almost close enough to touch. The crosshairs of the .50-calibre rifle's powerful scope brings the distant mound of earth so clearly into focus that you can see individual blades of grass.

A quick breath, a slight adjustment of the aiming point and only the slightest squeeze on the trigger and the rifle fires with a boom that leaves your head ringing and your shoulder nearly dislocated from the explosive recoil.

"Kicks a bit, doesn't it?" says a grinning Warrant Officer Rick Hills, the head of the army's "sniper cell," which trains the Canadian Forces elite sharpshooters. "Don't worry, you get used to it."

The Tac-50 is a brute of a rifle: more than 1.4 metres long, weighing in at about 12 kilograms and firing a cartridge longer than your hand. The Canadian snipers who used the "Big Mac" so successfully in Afghanistan compared its recoil to "getting whacked on the helmet by a hockey stick".

In fact it is more like getting hit in the head by a hockey stick when you are not wearing a helmet.

There are only about 150 qualified snipers in the Canadian Forces and competition is tight for the handful of openings. Fewer than a third of those who start the 45-day basic snipers course in Gagetown's area battle school pass the final exam.

"It's a very difficult specialty to get into," says Warrant Officer Hills. "And once you're in, the community of snipers tends to keep within itself."

The best of that small group came to the [Canadian Forces Base] Gagetown "concentration" last week, shooting in howling winds, driving rain and pitch black darkness, and still calmly dropping targets hundreds of metres away. Even hurricane Gustav's passage through the Maritimes during the competition did not phase the shooters.

The only thing that got under their skin was the staff at Gagetown's sniper cell, the hosts of the annual event.

"Those guys are crazy!" one sniper says, laughing and wiping the camouflage paint off his face as he walks away from the range. "They're making us nuts: We don't know whether we're coming or going."

The instructors lob artillery simulators—huge firecrackers that explode like mortar shells—to knock the snipers off their aim. They set off smoke grenades to screen their targets or start fires during night exercises to spoil infrared sights.

"We try to make things interesting," Warrant Officer Hills says with a wicked grin, pausing to wait for a simulated artillery shell to explode with a deafening bang. "This is what separates the range shooters from the field shooters. Some can do it; some can't."

During combat in eastern Afghanistan earlier this year, a five-man team of snipers from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry supported U.S. and Canadian soldiers fighting Taliban and al-Qaeda holdouts.

The Canadian snipers so impressed the Americans they were nominated for Bronze Stars and one sniper made what is believed to be the longest shot ever recorded, a 2,430-metre hit on an al-Qaeda fighter who had pinned down U.S. Airborne troops below him.

Teams from Canadian battalions took four of the top six spots, including first and second, at competitions at Fort Benning, Georgia and first and third in Fort Carson, Colorado.

Staff Sergeant Justin Shaffer, 27, a sniper section leader with the U.S. Army's 501st Airborne Regiment acknowledges that his Canadian counterparts are among the best he has seen.

"They have an excellent program here," he says. "These guys are very, very good."

Staff Sergeant Shaffer, whose team finished second among the 13 competing in Gagetown last week, said he has learned a lot from watching the Canadian system.

"There's always a lot of knowledge and techniques to share," he says. "Canadian snipers are definitely ahead in a lot of ways."

Master Warrant Officer Stu Hartnell, a former head of the sniper cell, says the key to the Canadian army's success at producing top combat snipers is realistic training: "The closest to combat conditions that we can make it," he says.

"We tried to simulate as closely as possible the fleeting nature of a sniper's target on the battlefield. People are diving for cover, running full tilt, only popping their heads up for a second, all sorts of stuff. They aren't standing up facing you, or jogging along one step at a time.

"So we made our targets smaller, we moved them along faster and we only showed them for a second at a time. Our targets are realistic, they work, and while the guys complain about them, when the course is finished they all admit: 'Yeah, you were right.'"

"A sniper team's a support weapon, just like mortars or machine guns," [Warrant Officer Hills] says. "And it's a very precise and accurate support weapon. An air strike can fall short; an artillery shell can spread shrapnel everywhere and cause collateral casualties. A sniper is capable of providing long-range precise fire with a minimal risk of collateral damage.

"In the right situation, a couple of snipers can accomplish more than a platoon's worth of soldiers with a higher rate of survivability."

From a *National Post* editorial entitled "Shooting Stars" 24 April 02:

Last month, U.S. General Warren Edwards, deputy commanding general of coalition land forces in Afghanistan, recommended five Canadian snipers for Bronze Stars for their performance in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan. Yet, on the eve of the honour being bestowed, Ottawa bureaucrats stepped in, citing protocol, and prevented the awards from going ahead. The Department of National Defence says the medals can be presented only after the U.S. Embassy informs the Canadian government of its intention to do so, sends its request to the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs' Office of Protocol, which will then send it to the Chancellery at Government House, which will then present it to a committee of eight officials who will decide if the snipers can be honoured.

This is no doubt interesting to scholars of diplomatic procedure, but the truth behind Ottawa's decision to step in is more interesting still, and a lot simpler. Sources inside the Department of National Defence have told this newspaper that protocol was seized on to buy time for the federal government to play catch-up and decide whether it too should honour the soldiers for their exemplary work. So the honours were iced to save Ottawa's blushes. The incident casts light on Ottawa's lack of interest in, and squeamishness about, military affairs.

The splendid quality of the Canadian snipers has been acknowledged for weeks and was documented in prominent newspaper photographs and stories. Despite the cold, snow and thin air of the Afghan mountains, the Canadians have systematically silenced enemy guns. A Newfoundland corporal hit an enemy gunner at nearly 2.5-kilometres [approximately 1.5 miles] away, a record distance under combat conditions. "All I thought of," said one Canadian sniper, speaking with a righteous seriousness that should make his compatriots proud, "was Sept. 11 and all those people who didn't have a chance and the American reporter who was taken hostage, murdered and his wife getting the videotape of the execution. That is my justification."

Gen. Edwards noticed the Canadian qualities. News organizations noticed. So why was Ottawa caught by surprise? Because the federal Liberal government habitually pays no mind to the military. It takes a U.S. general to point out that our forces are actually doing a great job. This is not a government that stands on ceremony when it has the political will to get something done—such as awarding a lucrative contract or grant. If it really cared about boosting military morale, it would have moved Heaven and Earth to make sure the snipers got their awards. It would not have

compounded the offence of not noticing their work by getting in the way when somebody else did. Ottawa should immediately give its permission for the award of Bronze Stars, then get out of the way.

From "U.S. commander lauds Canadians" by Mike Blanchfield, *Ottawa Citizen*:

The U.S. Army commander of the coalition base [at Kandahar] that has been home to more than 800 Canadian troops lauded their efforts in the war on terrorism yesterday during an impassioned speech under a scorching midday sun.

"I will never, ever, ever sit on my ass when the flag of Canada passes by in front of me," Colonel Frank Wiercinski told the Canadian soldiers in a final address one day before giving up command of the Kandahar-based Task Force Rakkasan.

The colourful Colonel, who has become a favourite among the Canadian troops, told members of the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry that, "I just wanted this last chance just to look at you one more time, for all that you've done for my country, for the world and for this task force," he said in a spirited speech that ended in lengthy applause.

Colonel Blaine Hopf, speaking on behalf of the Canadian troops, thanked the Colonel for spurring them on in way they were not used to from leaders back home.

Col. Wiercinski made the troops honorary Rakkasans last month, handing out combat patches.

"When you slapped that combat patch on every one of these Patricia's arms, I don't think there's a Canadian soldier alive that has felt that will, that domination, that power to enforce his ways on the enemy," Col. Hopf said.

Col. Wiercinski told the members of the Canadian battle group that their four comrades killed last April in a friendly fire incident would be honoured on the Rakkasan memorial wall at Fort Campbell, Ky., next February.

"I came here with a dream, to bring everybody home. I didn't do that," Col. Wiercinski told the Canadians. "I want you to know that every single one of us in Task Force Rakkasan—I think you know this—our heart was ripped out that night. They were four of my guys that were lost—and I will never, ever forget that."

He invited the Canadians to the annual reunion of the Rakkasans, telling them they were honorary members of the U.S. paratroopers unit.

Letter to the *National Post* editorial page under the heading "Wasted devotion" 13 September 02:

Re: The Fact is, Canada has Little to Bring to War, Sept.7.

A few years back I had the pleasure of "jumping" with a few airborne soldiers of the 22nd Infantry Regiment, at Val Cartier, Ont. As a U.S. Army Officer, I was continuously bombarded with questions from the younger soldiers, good soldiers all, about how they might go about joining the U.S. Airborne forces. Those I talked to felt that their esprit de corps was wasted in Canada, and that they could contribute more by joining an army that wasn't afraid to use soldiers as they should be used, to fight and win wars. I know I would appreciate having a Canadian Airborne soldier on my flank; it's too bad the soldiers know what the politicians appear to be afraid to say. Some things are worth fighting for.

Richard Cleveland, Belcamp, Maryland

From "Thousands cheer returning soldiers: "We've never seen anything like this"" by Robert Remington, the *National Post* (with files from the Canadian Press)

Thousands of people lined a parade route to Edmonton [Alberta, home of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Battle Group]s City Hall yesterday to give a heroes' welcome

to the Canadian troops who served in Afghanistan.

The parade and civic ceremony, which drew veterans from the Second World War and Korea never afforded homecomings of their own, caused some of the soldiers to choke back tears.

"I did two tours in Bosnia and we've never seen anything like this," said Warrant Officer Tony Wedham, a member of the 3rd Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) Battle Group. "It was overwhelming, from the time the parade kicked off. When we marched onto the dais area, it was just amazing. Tears were welling up. It was unprecedented for a lot of people."

Lois Hole, the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, laid a wreath at the city's cenotaph for Sergeant Marc Leger, Corporal Ainsworth Dyer, Private Nathan Smith and Private Richard Green, the four Canadians killed on April 17 near Kandahar by an errant bomb from a U.S. fighter jet.

In the most poignant moment of the ceremony, a lone piper played as the wreath was set. Words from a Bible passage read by Laurelle Callaghan, the senior PPCLI chaplain, hung in the air: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Brigadier-General Ivan Fenton, commander of Canadian Land Forces Western Area, appeared to sum up the soldiers' feelings in his official remarks to the crowd: "For the first time in a long time, the average Canadian has come to realize what it means to serve in the defence of Canada and what the price sometimes is," he said.

Between 10,000 and 15,000 people packed the grandstands and lined the parade route a dozen deep, waving flags and homemade signs that drew smiles from the soldiers.

"I want our troops to feel really appreciated. They deserve it," said Doug Pruden, who held a maple-leaf-shaped sign supported by hockey sticks. It was boldly painted with "God Bless Canada".

War veterans said the ceremony was important for a country not prone to outward displays of patriotism.

"We went without fanfare, we came home without fanfare," said Cornelius Neufeld, 71, a Korean war veteran.

"It makes me happy that, for a change, the public hears about this. We buried our dead in the country they were killed in, now they've brought them home. This is the American way of doing it. It shows Canadians the price of what we take so lightly for granted."

Maurice White, 77, said he was given an apple when he returned home from fighting his way through Italy and into Holland and France with the Loyal Edmonton Regiment during the Second World War. "We had a little ceremony, but nothing like this. It means a lot to these soldiers."

Brig.-Gen. Fenton said the ceremony would help the troops adjusting to home life after their six months in Afghanistan.

"Studies show that when you sense you are supported at home, it helps you to come back to that home life. I know it helps the families hugely," he said.

One young soldier, who declined to give his name, agreed. "Some of the American veterans of Vietnam were spat on and called warmongers when they came home and that messed them up more than the job they had to do. I can't tell you what this means," he said.

About 750 members of the 3PPCLI Battle Group were feted with a barbecue after the parade, served by volunteers with aprons that read "Our Military Rocks." About 150 members of the 2PPCLI Battle Group enjoyed a similar ceremony earlier this week in Manitoba.

"It was really overwhelming. I've never seen anything like this before. It felt good. It made me proud today," said Corporal Mark Verrall, a 3PPCLI medic.

Canada still has about 1,500 support troops in the Afghan theatre and remains committed to the U.S. led effort, said John McCallum, the Minister of National Defence. He read portions of a letter from U.S. General Michael Linnington, commander of the Afghanistan operation, that praised the professionalism of Canadian soldiers.

Lieutenant-Colonel Pat Stogran, commander of the Canadian troops in Afghanistan, heaped praise on his soldiers and called the ceremony one of the highlights of his 20-year military career.

"I have never been prouder than I am today to be a Canadian soldier," he said.

Next issue: *The Good*: observations from Lewis Mackenzie about his experiences commanding UN Peacekeepers, *The Bad & The Ugly*: A more detailed look at the Chrétien Liberals and their continuing sorry history in the aftermath of 9-11.

